

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

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FOL RPT BOMBAY 423 ACTION SECSTATE INFO NEW DELHI 20 FEB.

QUOTE

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EO 11612: NA

TAGS: PARM TECH IN

SUBJECT: ALLEGED RADIOACTIVITY FROM TARAPUR POWER STATION

REF: STATE 36121

1. I HAD HOUR LONG DISCUSSION WITH IAEC CHAIRMAN SETHNA TODAY ON QUESTIONS POSTED REFTEL AND ON PROBLEMS THAT HAVE ARISEN FOR IAEC'S ATOMIC POWER PROGRAMS AS A RESULT OF FUROR ARISING FROM SENATE HEARINGS. HE TAKES THIS MATTER VERY SERIOUSLY AND CLEARLY FEARS THAT CONTINUING DISTORTED PUBLICITY CAN DEAL A SERIOUS SETBACK TO HIS AMBITIOUS PLANS FOR EXPANSION OF ATOMIC POWER IN INDIA. HE EMPHASIZED THAT SENATE ACTIVITIES WHICH GENERATE THIS KIND OF PUBLICITY MAKE IT AWFULLY HARD FOR HIM TO COOPERATE WITH USG IN A FULL AND FRANK EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION. HE POINTED OUT THAT OFTEN CRITICS OF ATOMIC POWER MISREPRESENT SIMPLE, FACTUAL STATEMENTS WHICH ARE ACCURATE IN THEMSELVES BUT SO POORLY PRESENTED AS TO LEND THEMSELVES TO DISTORTION. THEREFORE, HE SAID, HE WANTS TO BE ESPECIALLY CAREFUL THAT MATERIAL PRESENTED ABOUT TARAPUR OPERATIONS

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AND THEIR SAFETY IS DONE IN BEST POSSIBLE MANNER. HE HAS

BROUGHT DRAFTS OF ANSWERS TO ALL QUESTIONS IN REFTEL BUT WANTS PERSONALLY TO GO OVER THEM THIS WEEKEND SO THAT THEY WILL PUT TARAPUR CASE IN ITS BEST POSSIBLE LIGHT. CONSEQUENTLY, HE DOES NOT INTEND TO TURN THEM OVER TO US UNTIL MONDAY.

2. HOWEVER, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF J.C. SHAH, HE WENT OVER ORALLY WITH ME ALL REFTEL QUESTIONS. IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT WRITTEN STATEMENT WILL CONTAIN NO SURPRISES. IT WILL SUBSTANTIATE WHAT SHAH EARLIER TOLD ME, SUPPORT THE IAEC'S CLAIM THAT THE TARAPUR OPERATION IS A 'SAFE' ONE, AND PROVIDE CONSIDERABLE DETAIL ABOUT TARAPUR PROGRAM AND PROCEDURES THAT SETHNA OBVIOUSLY BELIEVES COMPARE WITH THE BEST IN THE WORLD. IT WILL ALSO BE RELEASABLE TO SENATE COMMITTEE.

3. I DO NOT THINK THAT ANY USEFUL PURPOSE WOULD BE SERVED IN RELATING SETHNA'S COMMENTS ON REFTEL QUESTIONS UNTIL WE HAVE HIS WRITTEN STATEMENT. HOWEVER, I WILL AMPLIFY AS NEEDED WHEN I CABLE THAT DOCUMENT EARLY NEXT WEEK.

4. DURING DISCUSSION, SETHNA FREQUENTLY LAMENTED THAT HE HAS SEEN ONLY A SMALL PART OF MATERIAL THAT SENATE COMMITTEE IS DEALING WITH THE ONLY FULL DOCUMENT WHICH HE HAS READ IS MOTHER JONES' ARTICLE BY PAUL JACOBS. HE ESPECIALLY ASKED FOR INFORMATION ON STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO CLIFFORD BACK AND DR. HANAUER, WHO HE BELIEVES WERE EMPLOYEES OF USAEC AT ONE TIME AND MAY STILL BE EMPLOYED BY SUCCESSOR AGENCIES. HE WOULD ALSO LIKE THE RECORD OF THE CRANSTON COMMITTEE HEARINGS OF JAN 30. HE EMPHASIZED IT IS PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO DEFEND ONE'S PROGRAM SUCCESSFULLY WITHOUT A RECORD OF THE SPECIFIC CHARGES.

5. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE HAS SEVERAL TIMES REQUESTED GE TO SEND HIM A REPORT OF THE STATEMENT BY A CERTAIN WALKER OF BECHTEL AND SAID HE WOULD APPRECIATE ANYTHING WE COULD DO TO GET HIM THIS DOCUMENT ALSO. COURTNEY

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